18, 1979

Conspiracy view on JFK and King

United Press

Washington—The House Assassinations Committee yesterday formally asserted that both John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. were probably murdered "as a result of a conspiracy"—possibly involving underworld figures in Kennedy's case.

In a 28-volume final report on its two-year, $5.4 million investigation, the defunct committee challenged and criticized the Warren Commission and FBI findings that Lee Harvey Oswald and James Earl Ray acted alone.

Its central conclusions were these, endorsed by seven of 10 panel members with three dissenters:

• Kennedy: The panel majority reaffirmed its preliminary finding that a second gunman fired one shot at the president in Dallas' Dealey Plaza at the same time Lee Harvey Oswald loosed his fatal three-shot fusillade.

"The committee believes that President John F. Kennedy was probably assassinated as a result of a conspiracy," it said. "The committee is unable to identify the other gunman or the extent of the conspiracy."

Although it ruled out possiblity that any organized criminal organization may have supported Oswald "as a group," it said there is a possibility individual mobsters may have been involved.

• King: "The Committee believes, on the basis of the circumstantial evidence available to it, that there is a likelihood that James Earl Ray assassinated Dr. Martin Luther King as a result of a conspiracy."

It suggested Ray, King's convicted assassin, may have been aided by some of his brothers as he "stalked" the civil rights leader through the South and was motivated by greed rather than racism.

It said the conspiracy appeared to have been generated by Ray's desire to collect a $50,000 bounty for King's death allegedly offered by two St. Louis, Mo., businessmen. Both had died long before the committee opened its investigation.

Kennedy Plot Theory Is Rejected by Counsel To the Warren Panel

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 17 — The former counsel to the Warren Commission today rejected the conclusion of the House Assassinations Committee that the murder of President Kennedy was part of a conspiracy.

David W. Belin, counsel to the commission in 1964, said, "The conclusion that there was an unseen, hidden gunman is based on incomplete and incorrect investigation."

Mr. Belin, however, did not dismiss the House committee's allegation that the Warren Commission had failed to explore all conspiracy possibilities. "The Warren Commission did not have information about C.I.A. assassination plots against Castro that it should have had," Mr. Belin said, "and which probably would have broadened the scope of the commission's investigation."

Organized Crime Is Suspected

The House committee released its report today. The panel, which spent more than $5 million on its investigation into the assassinations of President Kennedy and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., concluded that organized crime elements had "probably" conspired to kill Mr. Kennedy and that two people had fired at the President in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963.

The committee concluded that Dr. King's death in Memphis on April 4, 1968, "probably" evolved from a conspiracy of right-wing St. Louis businessmen. Its report criticized the Justice Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation for failing to explore conspiracy possibilities adequately.

The House committee recommended that the Justice Department reopen the Kennedy investigation. Spokesmen for the F.B.I. and the Justice Department said that a decision would be made after a review of the committee's report.

Sources on the committee said that its published report did not include a long list of investigative leads the committee staff developed. These leads, the sources said, would be made available to the Justice Department should it reopen the investigation.